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June 2009

Colorado Horse Owners Protect their Horses during Microchipping Clinic



The Colorado Department of Agriculture's Animal Industry Division conducted a horse microchipping clinic for members of the Intermountain Horse Association (IHA) in Evergreen.

A premises identification number or PIN will allow emergency responders and animal health officials to locate livestock in the event of an animal health emergency such as disease outbreak or natural disaster like fire, flood, or blizzard. The individual animal identification number or AIN that is carried in the microchip then allows more efficient identification of animals that may be lost, stolen, or evacuated during an emergency. The event tripled premises registrations in that zip code and saw 74 horses

receive electronic transponder implants or microchips. David Richards, IHA president, considers the event a success.

Dr. Carl Heckendorf, manager of animal health and disease control with the State Veterinarian's office and an enthusiastic proponent of premises and animal identification, earlier had talked to fellow IHA members about the advantages of having a microchip in your horse in the case of an emergency.

Fires can be a real threat to mountain communities so club members see real benefits to having their horses identified with microchips. Richards said, "For the mountain community, the ability to retrieve information within hours of an evacuation is very important. And for those who compete with their horses, disease control and being able to digitize medical data when traveling with your horse is invaluable."

Brian and Nancy Alexander, managers of Broce Ranch, believe it just makes sense to have the horses microchipped. There are more than 50 horses on the ranch including those belonging to the ranch, to the Alexanders and to boarders. The Alexanders experienced retrieving horses from the Jefferson County Fairgrounds after the Table Mountain Fire a few years ago, and said providing proof of ownership was a challenge. "If our horses had been chipped, and we'd had an identification card, it would have been so much easier," said Brian Alexander.



During the clinic, horses were scanned to make sure the horse didn't already have a microchip. Finding none, Dr. Heckendorf placed an electronic implant transponder or microchip about the size of a grain of rice in a ligament in the neck. CDA staff then took the horse's picture, and the final stop was to receive an identification card.



The photo ID card, printed on hard plastic, includes the horse's name and colored picture, owner's name, premises identification number or PIN, microchip number. Members also received a card with emergency contact numbers. The only requirement of IHA members was that they obtain a PIN for the property where the horse is located.

For more information on premises and animal identification, visit www.coanimalid.org.